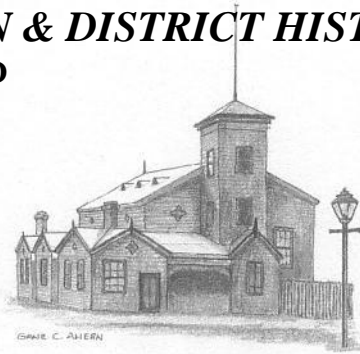


YARRA GLEN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

A0030684D

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NEWSLETTER

October 2009 (Published occasionally)
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Issue No: 33

COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

ERIC SYDNEY TETLOW

9 October 1930 – 15 June 2009



Photo courtesy of Dorothy & Keith Glass

FROM THE EDITOR

As announced in the previous issue this Newsletter commemorates our esteemed colleague, friend and former Secretary and Treasurer of the Society. I thank all those who responded to my call for items. The memories and tributes describe the variety of ways Eric applied his skills and indulged his passion for history; his generosity and quiet industry; and, inescapably, some of his idiosyncracies – they were part of the package and endeared him to many.

There is a wonderful spirit among the members of the Yarra Glen Historical Society who are determined to build on the legacy left to the community by Eric. There are always people at the History Room on Wednesday afternoons helping each other to become familiar with the collection and resources and sharing out the tasks that Eric undertook.

The Tetlow family generously requested that mourners at Eric's funeral make donations to the Society in lieu of flowers. Some of these funds are going to be used to establish an annual event called the Tetlow Talk. The first one is in November (*see the advertisement below*).

One small item of news that was able to cheer Eric as he lay in hospital was given to him by Barry Smith. Barry relayed the news that we had received a small grant to enable the publication of a history of the Yarra Glen Football Club (*see p.8*). Eric had no interest in football but he was supportive throughout the project. He would also have been delighted that the Society has received \$4500 from the Sugarloaf Pipeline Regional Benefits program. Eric initiated the request for computer equipment when he first heard of these funds being available.

Helena

Inaugural Tetlow Talk & Afternoon Tea

Sunday 8 November 2009

2:15pm for 2:30pm start

The History Room

[rear of the Memorial Hall, Yarra Glen]

The Yarra Glen & District Historical Society is establishing this annual event to honour the late Eric Tetlow, former Secretary and Treasurer of the Society. A guest speaker will feature on the programme with time allowed for questions/discussion. This will be followed by a special afternoon tea which will include some of Eric's favourite cakes and biscuits.

Guest speaker: Kristin Otto

Topic: Melbourne: capital of Australia 1901-1927

RSVP Friday 30 October 2009
Email: yarraglenhistorical@live.com.au
Phone: Brenda Cawte 9730 1801

Brief bio

Eric was born on 9 October 1930 when his parents, Bill and Nell were residing at Bacchus Marsh. His father was away for most of World War Two and life was considered tough. At 17 he went to Queensland droving and spent time in the High Country of Victoria. He even tested himself in rodeos with mixed results. Then it was off overseas at 26 to England for a working holiday. In 1967 he married Jenny Watts and they had two sons, Rob and Warwick. Eric was largely self-taught and enjoyed working outdoors. He spent many years working in occupations that could be undertaken in the fresh air. He worked in railway yards, in slaughter yards and as an inspector for the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works.

Glen Turnbull, President AEHS

The Historian

Eric's passion for history began when he started researching his family tree. He became a member of the Genealogical Society of Victoria and his insatiable curiosity knew no bounds. He was soon assisting others with their research. In 1984 he responded to a notice in the 'Help Needed' column of *The Age* newspaper which sought information about pharmacists who practiced in Victoria in the 19th century. Eric wrote to the enquirer that he had a friend descended from such a person and provided some genealogical data. He closed the letter in typical Eric fashion

I hope this information is useful, if I can help in any way with your project, please let me know. I am a member of the Genealogical Society of Victoria.

When [my friend] gets back [from overseas] I can probably persuade him to provide more information.

On retiring from the MMBW in the early 1990s Eric and Jenny searched for a small rural property. It was our good fortune that they found their 'dream home' in Yarra Glen. While in the local township Jenny spotted a notice in a shop window about the Yarra Glen & District Historical Society and Eric went along to the very next meeting. It was not long before he nominated for the Committee and then was elected Secretary. In addition he volunteered to provide classes in genealogical research at the Yarra Glen Living & Learning Centre.

As is often the case when doing local and family history one's enquiries lead to many places and it was not long before Eric joined the Healesville Historical Society, became a keen supporter of Gulf Station, a volunteer at the State Library of Victoria, and in 1998 was a founding member of the St Andrews Historical

Society. A related interest was military history and, his father having been a serviceman, Eric also joined the RSL Yarra Glen sub-branch.

Helen Mann, Editor *YGDHS Newsletter*

Healesville & District Historical Society

[Eric's] loss will be deeply felt by the Society. Not only was he the Treasurer, but also our main source of computer information and skill, particularly his down-loading and sending of emails, much of which work he did from home; and the setting up of our web site.

Eric has also left a legacy of his woodworking and other practical skills in the information 'sandwich board'; the wooden frame for the plaque on the door into our rooms, the 'Frank Foxcroft' board on the filing cabinets, the long timber board displaying memorial plaques, and many other 'hands-on' jobs he did for the Society.

Eric was a man of strong opinions, often expressed in a forthright manner. He was knowledgeable and well-informed, not only about local and military history but also about political and international events.

He had a wide range of interests from bushwalking, horse riding and DIY projects to films, historical research and community affairs.

The hundreds who attended his funeral are testimony to those interests and the friendships he made over a long and productive life.

Eric was a genius at researching family history and was able to help many people with their requests. He had a particular interest in researching family history in England and was very helpful in obtaining certificates for anyone requiring them.

Healesville History News, June 2009, p.5



Healesville Railway Station, May 2007 with Barry Sheffield

Gulf Station, Yarra Glen

Eric Tetlow will be missed at Gulf Station, the National Trust's historic farm at Yarra Glen. I know that, long before my own involvement with Gulf Station, Eric was a stalwart supporter. He always took an interest in happenings at Gulf and, at our special events, brought exhibitions of material from the Yarra Glen & District Historical Society and excelled at interesting our visitors in the displays.

An example of Eric's thoughtfulness: early in 2008, in conversation with Eric, I mentioned that the then Gulf Station manager was depressed at Gulf's situation (pressure from head office, etc, etc). Eric immediately said he'd 'just drop by for a cuppa and a chat' and he did, helping to raise the spirits of the manager.

In May 2009, Eric planned to bring material to a small event we volunteers were putting on at Gulf Station. He came on the day, just to visit, but apologised for not providing any exhibits as, he said, he had back problems. We had no idea of serious health problems.

We at Gulf Station have been privileged to know Eric.

Irene Kearsley, Gulf Station

St Andrews & Queenstown Historical Society

Eric Tetlow worked on a lot of small projects for the St Andrews & Queenstown Historical Society. He tended to work on family tree groups and find the family links between those who worked on the Caledonia Goldfields and then moved into the Yarra Glen district. Eleven years ago [1998] when our group began, Eric would take his time coming across 'the track', also known as Butterman's Track, to St Andrews.

He enjoyed the informality of our group and he was always ordering us to make coffee!

He soon settled in and became our favourite older gentleman. At this time, one of our members, Helen Kenney had her eighth child - her name was Rosie. I believe the first six months Eric attended just to see and hold Rosie!

In the last two years Eric would upload information onto our website and would answer or pass on enquiries.

Two weeks before Eric was admitted into hospital he was researching a family and I found a connection through an inquest that I had...he said when he came out of hospital he would buy me coffee and cake...never mind, next time!

Gaye Ponting, St Andrews Historical Society

State Library of Victoria

Eric was a dedicated and reliable volunteer with the Genealogy Team of the State Library of Victoria for about seventeen years.

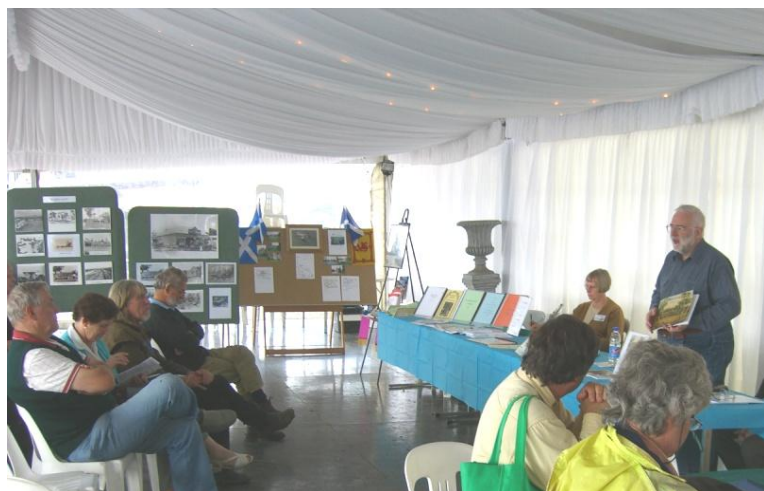
He will perhaps be best remembered for his work on the *Tetlow Index to the Robert Kerr Cole Collection of Hotel Records* which bears his name and was compiled by Eric over a ten year period from 1992 to 2003 and consists of over 21,000 entries of names of hotel licencees and others taken from the Melbourne city and metropolitan volumes of the Cole Hotel Records held in the Australian Manuscripts Collection of the Library. This Index is available both in microform and online through the Library's website. It will serve as a lasting legacy to Eric's commitment and indexing skills and will continue to be used by historians for generations to come. Along with the Darragh Index, it had a public launch at the Library on 30 September 2004.

Eric also assisted the Team with a number of other projects over the years. Each Wednesday he conscientiously searched for missing microfiche. In later years he supported the Library's lifelong learning activities in genealogy through preparation of information kits for participants.

We miss Eric greatly for his wonderful work as a volunteer, his humour, his longtime interest and support of the Library and the Genealogy Centre but most importantly as a friend of the Genealogy Team.

Anne Burrows, Genealogy Librarian

26 August 2009



One of the displays that Eric set up at Gulf Station, March 2007. On this occasion he was assisted by Anne Watkins, but often he set up, attended throughout the day, and dismantled it all himself. And no, he is not sleeping, just concentrating.

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Steels Creek Community

Eric and Jenny's home is in a road that runs off Steels Creek Road and, not long after they settled in, they were drawn into the Steels Creek community. Eric became a very committed supporter of the Community Centre located in the former school building. He loved any outdoor jobs and maintenance work and would take his ride-on mower and cut the grass. He threw himself into functions and activities from sports days to the Back to Steels Creek event in 1996.



Always pulled his weight



At the centre of things - celebrating a job well done after the Back to SteelsCreek 1996

All the while he was pitching in with practical help he was also getting stuck into the history of Steels Creek, especially the genealogy of the early settlers. Typical of the lengths he went to is the story told by Marjorie Porter...

In January 1996 I received a phone call from a gentleman from Steels Creek asking the question, "Are you the Marjorie Porter on the flyer put out for a Hunt Family gathering in February?" The gentleman went on to introduce himself. "I am Eric Tetlow and interested in the history of Steels Creek and the Yarra Valley." Eric asked if we would consider allowing him to attend the gathering in the Fitzroy Gardens. The gathering was to celebrate the 165th anniversary of the marriage of Eliza Beams and Robert Hunt. I was only too happy to say yes and have the opportunity of meeting Eric. From this meeting was cemented a genealogical friendship.

I was able to clarify for Eric just where the Clear Hills area was located. My ancestors Elizabeth Clements (Hunt) and her husband Samuel Clements had selected land on the Toolangi Road (then the main road from Yarra Flats). Elizabeth's brothers William and Albert Hunt selected land in the Steels Creek area. Thus establishing a long and enduring association with the area.

My brother Douglas Wilson passed on to Eric a Clements family history book. In the book were many references to the Clements family from Dixons Creek. Lo and behold, Eric told of working with one of the Clements descendants in his Board of Works days.

The year 2004 was the bi-centenary of the arrival in Sydney of the Beam/es brothers, Robert and Thomas (as guests of His Majesty's government). It was decided to hold a family gathering in Westbury, Tasmania (both brothers died in Tasmania). Eric took a great interest in the compiling of books to commemorate the event.

Whilst he and Jenny were on holiday in England, Eric visited the Warwick Archives to seek out information on Thomas Beams wife Martha Haynes (Gregory). What a treasure trove he brought back for us!

I mentioned to Eric our family story regarding the Earl of Shrewsbury. I had been able to borrow a couple of books written on the Earl, who became the only Duke of Shrewsbury, and was eager to obtain a copy of the Duke's will. No problem to Eric - within a very short time I was in possession of the complete will (A3 size pages). Eric had obtained it through a friend in England and refused to take payment for it. This was just Eric - always willing to help and only too happy to lend a hand.

Following the Black Saturday fires, I rang Eric to see if he and Jenny were OK. He was saddened by the loss of his friends but grateful he and Jenny were alright.

Eric opened many genealogical doors for me and I am proud to call him friend.

Dorothy Porter to Helen Mann, 31 August 2009

In 2006 Eric was Secretary of the Steels Creek Community Centre and in a letter to the CEO of the Shire of Yarra Ranges he expressed very concisely the importance of an historic building.

"The building, formerly Steels Creek State School, and its associated grounds is iconic to a great number of district residents, and has strong historical and sociological links for many Steels Creek families, past and present. Much of the historical information which we have compiled on the district in recent years has its focus around the old school site. It retains honoured links with local servicemen who fell in two World Wars. Moreover, the site remains a loved and well-used venue for the community market and many other activities which help to draw the folk of Steels Creek and nearby areas together."

Eric Tetlow, Secretary of the SCCC to CEO Shire of Yarra Ranges 2006

Association of Eastern Historical Societies

The full text of the following abbreviated article was published in the Newsletter of the AEHS, July 2009.

On Monday 15 June, Eric Tetlow passed away in hospital shortly after being diagnosed with cancer. He was 78. He left behind a mountain of research projects and the administrative work of three historical societies in our region. In May, Eric was one of the organisers for our AEHS Annual Conference held at the headquarters of the Yarra Glen & District Historical Society.

Eric was on the committee of three historical societies: Yarra Glen, St Andrews and Healesville. His many roles included being Secretary/Treasurer at Yarra Glen, Treasurer at St Andrews and former Treasurer and Committee member at Healesville. But he will be remembered for his ability to undertake research requests and finding that elusive piece of detail...His love for history made him determined to find the answers to those nagging questions: *why was it called that...and how did that...?* Eric was also certain about his knowledge of local history. He would argue the merits of the discussion and his thoughts but he would not be described as opinionated. Eric would let you know if something was not right, and this usually occurred at a quite reflective moment long after the discussion. I cannot recall a moment when I disagreed with his wise counsel.

Regular AEHS participants will remember Eric sitting in the front row of meetings. Many would suggest that this was because of his enthusiasm for the subject. That was certainly true but he became increasingly frustrated with his hearing difficulties and the ageing process. As a result, he attended fewer AEHS meetings in recent times.

I will always value Eric's support and our chats at AEHS events over more than 10 years. I will also remember the last time I saw him as he departed the AEHS Conference at Yarra Glen in May. When discussing the recent bushfires around Yarra Glen and whether he would leave, he remarked, *"the Tetlows were made of sterner stuff!"* He then gave me a smile, a wink and a thumbs up for the meeting we had just attended. He then disappeared off with his good friend Brenda Cawte.

Glen Turnbull, President AEHS

Yarra Glen & District Historical Society

Oh Eric!

I miss the sound of you shutting the door on your old yellow van.

I used to put the kettle on when I saw you coming,

and if you wanted a cuppa I tried to have your favourite Tim Tams to go with it.

Then we'd have discussion on historical notes, family concerns,

and your jokes.

I'm sad for your family losing you, but also of my losing a good friend.

Brenda Cawte, President YG&DHS



Having a cuppa with Brenda in the History Room (Anzac Day 2008)

From one of our members...

It is not surprising that I heard about Eric a few years before I met him – Eric was larger than life, and the Ringwood Historical Society referred to him in a newsletter as 'the iconic Eric Tetlow'. At his funeral the phrase 'a legend in his own time' was used, and it is not an exaggeration. His name came up when I caught up with people from Yarra Glen, and there was amazement I think that a newcomer was so quickly a part of the town.

So when I met him I was surprised that he was the person who did the work rather than the one to talk about things and get his picture in the paper! Not that he couldn't talk! Heaven forbid! Eric was a person

who was always interested in the people he was talking to, and listened to what they said (despite the accursed deafness which was stealing in) and really engaged with you intelligence to intelligence in conversation.

Eric was a fascinating conversationalist and a trustworthy email correspondent. He loved to pass on information and be useful, and I will really miss having things he would pass on to me. He was hard to pin down – he was a hustler, doer, always in motion, and then he could sit in silent contemplation at other times, just as easily. Eric had definite views, and he was willing to do the work himself to achieve what he saw as valuable. Nevertheless he listened to others.

Outside of occasional meetings and an email correspondence, we met at displays. I was an appreciative audience for the hard work he put into setting up displays at the Primary School and Gulf Station, and we would chat just as intensely about the merits of different display boards and display techniques as about the displays and their content. At the last Primary School display on Thursday 13th November 2008 we sat and talked for quite a bit, and he said he had given up the volunteering at the State Library and had found setting up this display hard. He said he hadn't been well for a while, and it was slowing him down.

Our recent email correspondence was about the scanner and hard drives I had bought for storing Mt Evelyn's historical records (with the funds from a Federal Government Volunteer Small Equipment Grant), and Eric was keeping my husband Tim and me involved so we could come over and advise if needed!

Eric showed his love for humanity by his acts of service to others, and he encouraged you to be useful too! He was loyal – once you were on his list of friends, you stayed there, and you didn't want to be left off! He was quick witted and full of humour. He was impatient of stupidity, pettiness and silliness, and encouraged those around him to always do better. He expected the best from me, and I found myself wanting to live up to his expectation. He thought big, not small.

Eric made life more interesting and colourful, and so you were always pleased to see him because here was entertainment on legs, smiling broadly because he was pleased to see you! He has left huge holes which memory alone cannot fill. Not only the practical holes of committee positions and work-no-longer-done, but the intangible holes of a warm hearted person. The warm and friendly world has shrunk a little, and he is sorely missed.

Paula Herlihy (née Tucker)
Member YG&DHS



Enjoying a meeting of the YG&DHS at the former meeting room with friends (the late Leigh Ahern pictured) and a birthday cake, October 2005.

A fellow historian...

One of the best things about growing old is that it seems to bring you closer to having a long-held wish granted. Surely, now there'd be more time for spending with one or other person you've enjoyed meeting during a long life! With the busy, bee-hive years over, you look forward to hours of leisure sharing the interests and discoveries you have in common with that person.

Such a person on my list was Eric Tetlow. We probably met only about six times, as members of neighbouring historical societies. In a few short years, however, we exchanged heaps of local history snippets via email. If I "got stuck" when researching something, an email to Eric would be the first help I'd seek. Not only was he invariably helpful, but he was also amazingly prompt. It seemed that no sooner had I pressed the "send" button, than back would come a helpful pointer, some relevant information plus a good-humoured comment or two.

Alas, there'll be no more of that! And sadly, the long-held wish will never be granted.

I know almost nothing about Eric in other contexts, but I feel sure that the sadness I feel at his death is only a fraction of the grief his sudden death has brought to family, friends, and colleagues at the Yarra Glen Historical Society.

John Austin, Kangaroo Ground

**Typical of many satisfied enquirers (worldwide!)
is this account from the UK...**

Dorothy Glass submitted an enquiry to the Yarra Glen & District Historical Society via its web page in May 2006.

I am in England researching the Pitcher family tree. I have recently found out my granddad Sydney Pitcher was discharged in 1916 from the Australian Army to reside in Steels Creek, Yarra Glen, and he is on the Roll of Honor as a resident at Steels Creek. I am trying to find any descendants who may still be in your area. Names I have are George Pitcher (brother) and sisters Matilda Gray and Florence Carter.¹

Dorothy describes the outcome of her enquiry...

Dear Helen

We met Eric via the internet, all because of an AIF discharge notice showing granddad Syd's intended residence at Steels Creek. It was a truly happy moment. Eric was interested, friendly and so helpful. In a few months he had helped us locate our Melbourne family which had been lost to us for over 80 years. We first met him "in the flesh" at Melbourne Library. The 4 of us wandered in - along with a few other people - and this lively man dashed over and said "Are you Keith?" How did he know instantly?. He knew so much or at least how to find out. I said to him "Do the Government know about you. You are a national treasure." His amused reply - "I do keep telling people but they don't believe me".

Anzac Day 2007 was a wonderful day. After the event Eric and Jenny welcomed us into their home for lunch, later Eric took us to Steels Creek where we met Meryl and Geoff Collinson, Eric had found they had copy letters granddad had written from Gallipoli! Marvellous! He took us to Kangaroo Ground where granddad once owned land. The list seems endless.

We did keep internet contact. The last time for us in the U.K. was when the forest fires were raging. Our family in Melbourne saw Eric again on Anzac day 2008 and 2009. We are all so shocked and sad to hear of Eric's death.

We only knew him a short time but it felt as though we always knew him.

Best wishes

Dorothy and Keith Glass.
9 September 2009

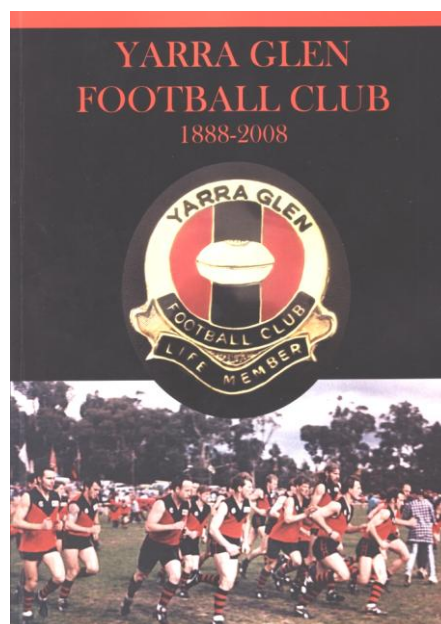
¹ Article about Syd Fisher can be found in *YG&DHS Newsletter*, no.21, August 2006

NOTICES



**History Week
OPEN DAY
Sunday 1 November 2009
11am – 4pm**

Free entry



Recently published

\$25 per copy

Yarra Glen Football Club 1888-2008
by Barry Smith & Helen Mann

The history of the Yarra Glen Football Club is also the history of a close knit community. As well as the highs and lows of the football matches this book highlights the hard work of the supporting families and friends, the off-field social and fund-raising activities, and more.

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